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present was unwise/unprofessional to put it at its lowest. Put to him like that, Ronnie appeared to agree and said that, in similar circumstances, he had sacked people and paid whatever it cost because they could not be got bang to rights. He implied that, if I asked him to do so, he would sack Reserve Constable Atkinson. I said that it was a matter for him not me. We might need to revert to the point.

9. I asked why Reserve Constable Atkinson had not been suspended from duty while such a grave matter was being investigated. Ronnie said that he had been kept away from it as standard practice in case he had to sit in a disciplinary case. I said that he was surely responsible for the policy. He said that the decision to suspend would depend on the strength of the prima facie evidence as well as the seriousness of the allegation. I feel (but did not say) that the failure to suspend may be indicative of a failure to strike the right balance between fairness to the officer and taking seriously a very serious allegation.

10. What to do? You [REDACTED] and I had better talk. I am inclined to think that we need to hire some help as we hired [REDACTED] to help with [REDACTED]. This is more straightforward but it is still hard to do all that is required alongside a day job. I have in mind the production of a memorandum or two memoranda. The first purpose would be to allow the Secretary of State to reach a soundly based decision on a public inquiry. If he decided to set one up, that would be the only purpose. If he decided to do nothing, the second purpose would be to provide the guts of a pretty full public explanation of why he had decided not to set up a public inquiry. Whatever view we take eventually of Ronnie's view that a public inquiry cannot be set up until disciplinary action is finished, there can be no reason for not getting on now with the production of a heavy weight memorandum. I cannot see the call for a public inquiry

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